In 490bc Darius amassed a massive [Persian fleet](http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/marathon.htm) that sailed to Marathon, which is on the northwest coast of Attica. Although the Athenians were outnumbered, under the command of Miltiades the Athenian army was victorious. The Athenian hoplites slaughtered about a fourth of the Persian forces while fighting on the plain of Marathon. The rest of the Persians made an attempt at attacking a defenseless Athens, but the Greeks were able to return to Athens in time to drive off the last of the Persian forces. Before the Athenians defeated Persia they believed there was no hope of victory if they fought alone, so they sent [Philippides](http://www.mlahanas.de/Greeks/Philipides.htm) to run all the way to Sparta and request help. When he got there the Spartans said that they would help when the moon is full. Then Philippides returned to Athens to tell them the Spartans response. He managed to arrive at Marathon in time for the battle and after Athens was victorious he ran back to the city to give the message that Athens was victorious. Then he dropped dead from exhaustion.